

# *Housing*

## **Safe, Affordable Housing for People with Mental Illness**

The Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services (BDS) housing goal is to fund, develop, recruit and support a variety of housing options which can accommodate varying levels of supportive assistance to consumers, depending upon consumer needs. To accomplish this, a variety of initiatives are in place through the BDS office of Program Development. These include Shelter Plus Care, the Bridging Rental Assistance Program, and other special programs.

### **Shelter Plus Care (SPC)**

SPC is funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and designed to provide rental subsidies to homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Limited subsidies are also available to individuals with other disabilities. One of the components of SPC is to encourage administration of these resources at a local level. As a result, various SPC grants are currently administered by a collaboration of local providers, state agencies, and the federal government. This collaboration is the backbone of existing SPC programs.

In keeping with SPCs intent to reduce homelessness, program participants work towards greater stability and self suffi-

ciency by developing short and long term goals with their service provider. Service providers assist individuals with various housing related needs including communication with their landlord. Participants are supported in pursuing treatment, case management, educational and job training opportunities.

For eligibility, individuals must meet the homelessness and disability criteria as defined by HUD. Program participants pay 30% of their adjusted gross income towards rent. SPC subsidizes the remaining portion of the rent up to HUD's published Fair Market Rents. If not currently receiving income, eligible participants are encouraged to apply for entitlement benefits. Assistance is also available for individuals who wish to apply for entitlement benefits or a representative payee.

### **Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP)**

The Bridging Rental Assistance Program (BRAP) was created by BDS to help people with psychiatric disabilities afford decent, safe and sanitary housing in communities of their own choice. It operates to preserve individuals' eligibility for federal rental assistance, the Housing Choice Voucher program (a.k.a. Section 8).



State of Maine  
Department of Behavioral  
and Developmental Services

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BRAP assistance is a temporary rental assistance housing program, lasting for up to a 24-month period although it may be extended. BRAP is portable within the State of Maine. Under BRAP, a tenant will pay 51% of his/her income to rent, the remainder will represent the BRAP subsidy amount up to HUD's published Fair Market Rents. To be eligible, a consumer must be an adult with a psychiatric disability for which he/she is currently receiving SSI or SSDI and be willing to apply for federal rental assistance, the Housing Choice Voucher program. Wait list status for the Housing Choice Voucher program must be maintained while participating in the BRAP program.

Within the eligible BRAP population, there are four priorities: 1) people who are leaving State psychiatric institutions or private psychiatric hospital beds, or those who have been discharged in the last six months from these institutions; 2) people who are homeless as defined by HUD; 3) people who are moving from community residential programs funded by BDS to more independent living arrangements; and 4) people who are living in substandard housing as defined by HUD.

### **Affordable Apartments and Homes**

Homeownership assistance and housing preservation through referrals to: Coastal Enterprise Inc.'s *Lease Purchase Program* as well as below market rate loans through the Maine State Housing Authority and the United States Department of Agriculture—Rural Development.

BDS continues to be a very active participant in the nationally competitive, HUD funded Continuum of Care process. Working with the Cities of Bangor and Portland, as well as the Maine State Housing Authority, we have been able to increase the efficiencies and delivery of these federally funded services. Last year, Maine's application, submitted by the Maine State Housing Authority, received one of the highest rankings in the nation.

*For more information about  
BDS visit: [www.state.me.us/bds/](http://www.state.me.us/bds/)*